

INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION AS AN ENABLING FACTOR FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Most development programmes end up as mere growth and not sustainable development. As a result, it becomes essential to examine indigenous communication systems that are supposed to aid development efforts. This is because development is multifaceted, multi-sectorial and widely a participatory process in which the intended beneficiaries are actively involved in every phase. It is also pertinent to assess the effect of exogenous media on the indigenous media with regards to rural development efforts. To achieve these, an in-depth anthropological fieldwork was conducted to examine rural development efforts with regards to their utilization of indigenous media in Mbano, South-east Nigeria. The study also adopted modernization and social change theories as well as impact assessment model. Sampling was by multi-stage and purposive sampling methods. Research methods used were both qualitative and quantitative. It was found that a lot of factors have prevented full achievement of development in rural areas of Nigeria. It has also been discovered that the best form of development is participatory development in which the actual beneficiaries actively participate from the inception of the programme up to the evaluation stage. As a result, indigenous communication is relevant to socio-economic development of the rural communities. So, participatory development is the ideal and it must involve a good knowledge of the people's culture, which has indigenous communication at its centre. The study therefore, recommends the full utilization of indigenous media in sensitizing and mobilizing the rural people for participation in development programmes.

Keywords: Indigenous Communication, Rural Community, Development.

Introduction

To gain a perfect insight into the reason why development programmes, especially in rural communities end up as mere growth and not development, it is essential to examine some indigenous communication systems that are supposed to

aid the programmes. This is because development is multifaceted, multisectorial and widely a participatory process in which the intended beneficiaries are actively involved in every phase from need identification to need prioritization, project planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation and the distribution of the benefits (Adelugba, 1996; Foster, 1969; Isah, 2011). There is also the need to examine the persisting traditional communication system and their attendant customs and beliefs as well as general socio-political perceptions toward implantation of development programmes. It is also pertinent to examine the effect of the exogenous media on the indigenous media with regards to rural development efforts. To achieve these, an in-depth anthropological fieldwork was conducted to examine the indigenous communication system that exists in Mbano, Imo State, Nigeria. The study also assessed rural development efforts with regard to their utilization of indigenous media.

The study is hinged on four main objectives. Firstly, to examine how indigenous media can be used to mobilize rural people for participation towards development. Secondly, it is to assess the knowledge of rural Igbo communities of Nigeria on the application of indigenous media for achieving effective rural development. Thirdly, it is to examine ways of combining indigenous and modern media to achieve effective rural development. In its fourth objective, the study assesses the ways in which indigenous communication can enhance rural development. The method is historical and analytical. Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used.

The Nature and Content of Indigenous Communication System

According to Wilson (1987), indigenous communication system is a continuous process of information dissemination, entertainment and education used in societies which have not been seriously dislocated by Western culture or any other external influence. Indigenous communication media refers to the mode of control (ownership) and model. It is important to note that under indigenous communication system, ownership of the means (media/channels) of communication lies with the society. The village head only acts as a trustee and head of the gatekeeping process. Similarly, Mundy and Lin Compton (2013) posited that indigenous communication includes the transmission of entertainment, news, persuasion, announcement and social exchange of every type – it is an important aspect of culture and the means by which a culture is preserved, handed down and adapted.

Serious academic studies did not begin in this area of indigenous communication system until 1970s when Ugboajah (1972) began to call attention to these neglected but powerful communication system. Strength was also added to this area when Wilson (1981) working in the Cross River area of Nigeria approached this field through a systematic study. The theatre of workshop experimentation recommended by experts in Botswana in 1979 and studies by Nwuneli (1981) have also contributed to our knowledge of indigenous media. It is therefore becoming clearer to scholars in both the First and the Third Worlds that a good understanding

of the structures, patterns, process and uses of such media could enhance their multiple applications for human national development.

Wilson (1987) divided the numerous indigenous forms of communication found in Nigeria into ten classes:

- (i) **Idiophones** These are self-sounding instruments or technical wares which produce sound without the addition or use of an intermediary medium. The sound or message emanates from the materials from which the instruments are made and they could be shaken, scratched, struck, pricked, pulled or pressed with the feet. These include gong, wood lock, wooden drum, bell and rattle.
- (ii) **Membranophones** These are media on which sound is produced through the vibration of membranes. They include all varieties of skin or leather drums. These drums are beaten or struck with well-carved sticks or fists.
- (iii) **Aerophones** These are media which produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air. They comprise media of the flute family, whistle, reed pipes, horns and trumpets.
- (iv) **Symbolography** This simply means symbolic writing or representation. Communication takes place when an encoder uses graphic representations to convey a message which is understood within the context of a known social event and an accompanying verbal message. It is a descriptive representational device for conveying meaning. An example is the use of fresh unfolding frond of the palm tree usually with greenish yellow colour. It is tied and shaped in different ways to convey meaning in Mbano.
- (v) **Signals** These are the physical embodiments of a message. Many ancient signals are still being used today. Some of these signals include fire, smoke, gunshots, canon shots and drumbeats. It is obvious that almost all broadcasting stations in Nigeria use drum signal to draw the attention of its audience to the fact that they are about to begin transmission for the day; deliver their main news broadcast; announce time; close down or prepare for the broadcast of the local or national leader.
- (vi) **Objectifs** These are media presented in concrete forms which may have significance for a specific society only or may be universal through their traditional association with specific contextual meanings. These include kolanuts, the young unopened bud of the palm frond, charcoal, white pigeon or fowl, white egg, feather, cowries, sculptures, pictures, drawings among others.

- (vii) **Colour Schemes** This is the general conception and use of combination of colours in a design to convey some meanings. Colour uses the advantages of pictorial communication by combining the speed of its impact and freedom from linguistic boundaries to achieve instant and effective communication. Important colours used to communicate different meanings among Mbanjo people are red (danger), white (peace or pure), black (mourning), green (life) and yellow (spiritual).
- (viii) **Music** Itinerant musical entertainment groups sing satirical songs, praise songs and generally criticize wrong doings of individuals in society. Names of those being satirized or praised may be mentioned or descriptions of their physical or personality attributes given; where they live or what they do may form part of such songs. Grapevine stories concerning events or projects that are being planned for the society may be featured as a way of alerting the generality of the people. Such groups are potent sources of information.
- (ix) **Extra-mundane communication** This is the mode of communication between the living and the dead, the supernatural or Supreme Being. It is usually done through incantation, spiritual chants, rituals, prayers, sacrifice, invocation, séance, trance, hysterics or libation.
- (x) **Symbolic Display** These may be culture-specific or may have universal significance e.g. smiling, sticking out the tongue, expression of anger, disgust, happiness and fear, the way we walk or sit, gestures we use, voice qualities and facial expressions.

This categorization is not quite different from the ideas put forward by Ogwezzu (1999) and Akpabio (2003). They believed that African communication systems through their various categories have sustained the rural people over the years. According to them, the rural populace never experienced underdevelopment until the colonial period. This is because whatever they needed to make their lives meaningful were available to them within their environment.

In addition to the forms just discussed, many traditional institutions, clubs or societies in Mbanjo are also used to disseminate information, pass on gossips, rumours and at times highly confidential information. They include the town crier, cooperative societies, town/village unions, voluntary organizations, drinking clubs, market women's associations, traders' associations, religious groups, masquerade cults, sports clubs, self-help groups, choral groups and many others whose activities are directly linked with communication. All these are channels of indigenous communication system. It should be noted that the town crier is a very important conduit of communication in Africa, especially in Mbanjo.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In social anthropological study, the focus of analysis is usually the community unit. This is the approach of this study because unlike the modern communication media, the indigenous media is community owned and used.

It should be noted that complete eradication of poverty is a key imperative to development of a country like Nigeria. This is because poverty is situated in the rural areas where the poorest people live (Ajadi, 2010). Therefore, in an attempt to explain the importance of communication towards achieving such development, Dalton (1970) points out that whatever the anthropologist is concerned about, whether the structure and performance of traditional primitive or peasant economies or their change, development and modernization, he is supposed to understand the characteristics of the industrial capitalist countries. Dalton's view is that the industrial capitalist countries should be casually copied. He means that in order to bring development to rural societies, it is important to understand the underlying communication pattern of the society to ensure not just development but sustainable development. In his own case, Ugboajah (1979) points out that the problems of developing nations, especially those with rural communities have given rise to various development theories. He explains that the "most important thing about Africa's traditional communication is that the audience has learnt to attach great significance to it" (Ugboajah, 1979: 11).

Similarly, Ayittey (1991) notes that the main obstacle that has caused the underdevelopment of Africa had been the difficulty of penetrating the layers of mythology, ignorance and prejudice enshrouding Africa and its people. As a result, Europeans conclude that Africans had no history. So, if Africans have no history, by implication they are not supposed to talk of indigenous communication media because they are said to have no culture. All these are wrong views of Africa and Africans. It has also been observed by Ogueri and Nnadi (2010) that Nigeria is blessed with natural resources especially hydrocarbons. Managing proceeds of resources to develop rural communities had created several conflicts. International communities had long been contributing to development in Nigeria. International NGOs, Bilateral Organisations, Multinational Corporations have demonstrated sufficient interest in development issues in Nigeria. Surprisingly, more assistance means higher poverty and conflict levels. The question is – How come most communities are still very rural and basic amenities lacking? To address this and other questions, the study attempts to find ways through which indigenous media can be used to enhance rural development.

The theoretical strength of the study includes modernization theory, social change theory and social impact assessment model (Ogburn, 1967; Preston, 1996; Carley and Derow, 1980; Campbell, 1987). The interdisciplinary nature of an anthropological study of community development informs this multiple theoretical application. This approach is in line with the anthropology of community development, which emphasizes complementarities in theory rather than contradictions (Ajala, 2002). Furthermore, each theory brings out useful but limited

explanations about community development paradigms being socio-cultural phenomena.

Modernization theory emphasizes that there is distinction between rural and urban, poor and rich, underdeveloped and developed, traditional and modern. Modernization theorists (Rostow, 1960; Pye, 1966) argue that the only way poor nations can achieve capital formation, productivity and consumption comparable to those in developed countries is for them to duplicate the cultural institutions of the later (Thompson, 2001). Category distinction which is the hallmark of modernization theory is under serious attack. However, modernization was basically an idea of universal development that placed all societies in the world on a simple and shared continuum from the least to the most developed.

According to this ideology, development should be a structured transformation of traditional societies from underemployed rural societies to productive urban-industrial societies. So, modernization is the process of acquiring new image, a process, which is made possible by mass contact, mass communication and mass education and more recently through the internationalization of culture. It rests on the ideas of development and integration.

Therefore, with imperialism, colonialism and their resultant institutions especially mass media, the traditional communication pattern changed. However, their credibility among the rural populace is still treasured.

Social change theory posits that there is the difference in attitude, behaviour, technology or social institution in comparison with what they were in the past. The theory being a popular reference in the study of societies explains that material culture changes faster than non-material culture. By extension, it points to the fact that material aspects of indigenous media are likely to be eroded by the modern mass media than the non-material aspect. So, there exists a great deal of difference in the perception and theoretical orientations of analysts of societal transformation. This is actually what made Marxist theories to believe that conflict is the only means for change (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

A close look at the real impact of indigenous communication on specific community's development shows that there is need to assess the people that are affected, the distributional effects of indigenous communication and the impacts of the practice on different development efforts for the people's benefit. To do this, social impact assessment model (SIA) becomes a reference. This model is a broad concept to studies in social and cultural impact of development plans and programmes (Carley and Derow, 1980). For this study, SIA was geared towards ascertaining how properly integrated and directed indigenous media can enhance real development efforts in rural communities.

Methods and Research Design

Socio-Economic Background of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Mbanda, Imo State of Nigeria. Mbanda is made up of two local government areas – Isiala-Mbanda and Ehime-Mbanda. It occupies a land

area of 352 square kilometers with a population of about 476,656 according to 2006 census (Nigerian Population Commission, 2006). The area is densely populated with density of about 600 people per square kilometer. Almost all the autonomous communities in the area have at least one primary and one secondary school each. Mbanjo has tropical rain forest but the vegetation is gradually turning to a derived savanna due to extensive farming activities. The area has a rural settlement which is more closely packed. There is no mass media station in Mbanjo. However, television and radio signals are clearly received in the area. Newspapers and magazines are also available especially at the local government headquarters.

Mbanjo is selected for the study not by happenstance. Imo State, where Mbanjo is located, has a large number of literate persons. Moreover, Mbanjo is a community which is still rich in indigenous communication in spite of the influence of the modern mass media. Its environment produces all the instruments used in its indigenous communication such as *ekwe* (wooden gong), *opi* (flute) and *ogwo* (drums). Again, it is a community which has witnessed several development projects that failed to achieve the expected objectives. All these factors made the selection of Mbanjo community purposive and significant for both the examination of indigenous communication system and assessment of its impact on rural development.

Mbanjo is predominantly occupied by Igbos. There is also some non-Igbos in the area, comprising mostly of the Hausa and Edo from the northern and western parts of Nigeria respectively.

The structure of compounds is basically the same everywhere. In the past, leaves of raffia palm were used as roofing materials while the walls of houses were usually mud. During this period, every compound was fenced with palm fronds for poor families and mud for wealthy ones. However, in recent time, modern houses with brick walls and corrugated iron roofing sheets have replaced the old styled buildings. However, the pattern of the compounds has remained relatively the same, that is, there is usually a cluster of houses in one compound.

The economic pattern is basically subsistence with the production of food crops, such as yams, cocoyam, cassava, maize, beans and leafy vegetables. Cash crops such as oil palm exist but are mostly adopted. Most of the cash crops are never cultivated. Most of the young people in Mbanjo live in different parts of the world. They mostly return home during festive periods, especially Christmas. Usually, many men and women in the area combine farming with other jobs such as trading, artisanship and commercial vehicle driving.

Each autonomous community in the area has one weekly market with two or more evening markets. These markets serve as primary source of food procurement and exchange. The people's staple diets are usually derived from cassava, yam, cocoyam, cereals and vegetables. Fish and meat are taken for provision of animal protein. Other food supplements include rice, plantain, beans, eggs and beverages.

Social organization is patrilineal with patrilocal residence. Monogamy is the predominant system of marriage. However, the culture does not frown at polygyny. The people of Mbanjo are mainly Christians but most of them still patronize traditional

religion, though secretly. In this study area, inheritance is only through the patrilineal males.

The people of Mbanjo have no known tribal marks. Their dress is typical of the indigenous traditional Igbo attire, usually a singlet or shirt worn over flowing wrapper or trousers for men. On the farm, most men wear shorts and no top. This is to wade off excessive heat. However, during ceremonies, elderly men wear the chieftaincy attire and a red cap. Occasionally, men complete their dressing with walking stick (nkpara). Women on the other hand, wear an upper garment (blouse) tucked into an inner wrapper which reaches the ankle. Another wrapper which reaches the knee is tied upon the inner one. Dress is usually crowned by a head gear (ichafu).

In this area, the head of the family (ezi n'ulo) is usually the husband and he is also the breadwinner. But when he dies, the wife acts until the first son comes of age. Then, the first son assumes the leadership role as the head of the family. The common practice is the extended family system. It is a mixture of monogamous and polygynous extended family structure. Mbanjo is a typical patrilineal society. The eldest male in the extended family holds in trust the immovable property of the family (especially land) on behalf of other members. When the young males come of age, such property is shared among the adult males. Women do not have right of inheritance in the family.

The indigenous language of the people is Igbo. However, in recent times, as a result of the influence of Western education, a lot of people in the area speak English language or at least 'pidgin' English. Their residence pattern is a cluster of houses (2-8) in one compound.

Traditionally, the people of Mbanjo engage in several self-help development efforts. This development comes in form of clearing of roads; building wooden bridges across their streams, town halls, market stalls, churches and so on. To raise money for most of these projects, the people are usually mobilized to pay levies or sometimes their palm fruits are collectively harvested, sold and the proceeds used for such projects. To mobilize and sensitize the people, the town crier usually goes round the community with gong either to inform the people of the project or to invite them to a gathering where the project will be discussed. Most times, various age grades are empowered to ensure compliance of their members towards the developmental effort.

Research Design

The study applied multi-stage random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The multi-stage random sampling technique enabled the research to achieve a fair representation while purposive sampling technique helped the study to gain in-depth knowledge of the issue investigated. For the multi-stage random sampling, the point of reference is the political wards (PWs) which were delineated by National Population Commission in 2006. A political ward is a compact area carved out of a locality with well defined identifiable boundaries. Mbanjo had 28 wards. Four wards were randomly selected from each of the two local government areas that

make up Mbanjo. The second stage was the selection of household (HH). It was noticed that each political ward in Mbanjo has between 850 and 1100 households (HHs). The selected wards have 976 to 1050 households (HHs). From this number, 20 households were selected from each ward through simple random sampling. This gives a total of 80 households (HHs). From each of these households, 3 respondents were randomly selected. So, 240 respondents were selected from the eight wards to ascertain the relevance of indigenous communication to rural development.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) key informants and thirty (30) in-depth interviewees who comprise of traditional heads, custodians of indigenous media, elderly men/women (over 70years), and leaders of various indigenous organizations, local government officials and development agencies.

Quantitative data were gathered through the use of questionnaire administered orally. Questionnaire designed covered variables such as demographic factors, knowledge of existence and use of indigenous communication media, rural development as well as the relevance of such media to development. Qualitative information gathering techniques included in-depth interview, key informants interview, observations and the assessment of written records, which produced data on traditional knowledge, practices and decision-making on the use of indigenous communication system for rural development. These data were generated through the analysis of both emic and etic perceptions.

Results

There exist a lot of factors that have prevented full achievement of development in rural areas of Nigeria. These are both exogenous and indigenous. The exogenous factors are usually imported ideas, philosophies and technologies that are not compatible with the rural communities' ideologies. The indigenous factors are cultural practices which if neglected may prevent the development projects from achieving their purpose in the community. These sometimes include the indigenous communication system. The critical analysis of all these factors constitutes the mainstream of the research findings.

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

In the study, a total of 300 respondents were involved. Two hundred and forty (240) respondents were involved in the survey study, while 30 were selected as key informants and another 30 respondents fell into in-depth interviews. Data presented here provide idea about the gender distribution, age variation, educational status, marital status, occupation, communication types/instruments used, effect of exogenous media on indigenous media and effect of indigenous communication on the success of rural development efforts (Tables 1, 2, 3).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable Age	Male (N=155)	Female (N=85)	Total (240)
0-10	13	6	19
11-20	21	15	36
21-30	11	10	21
31-40	18	5	23
41-50	30	12	42
51-60	42	19	61
Above 60	20	18	38
Total	155	85	240

Education

No formal education	21	27	48
Primary	60	22	82
Secondary	56	20	76
Post Secondary	18	16	34

Marital Status

Single	51	20	71
Married	62	36	98
Widowed	39	23	62
Divorced	13	6	19

Source: Fieldwork 2011

It can be seen from table 1 that respondents who were below eleven years were 19 and this is made up of 13 males and 6 females. Those who were aged between 11 and 20 years were 36 in the sample. The third category of respondents was 21-30 years and they were made up of 11 males and 10 females. Respondents who were between 31 and 40 years in the sample were 23 in number. Forty-two other respondents belonged to the age bracket of 41-50 years. The highest number of respondents in the sample (61) belonged to the age bracket of 51-60 years. They were made up of 42 males and 19 females. Those who were above 60 years in the sample were 38 in number.

In terms of education, 48 respondents in the sample had no formal education and they were made up of 21 males and 27 females. Those who had secondary education were 82 in number, that is, 56 males and 20 females. Only 34 respondents had post secondary education and they were made up of 18 males and 16 females.

The above table also points out that the number of respondents in the sample who were single were 71 (51 males and 20 females) while married respondents were 98 (62 males and 36 females). Those respondents who were widowed were 62, that is, 39 males and 23 females. Divorced respondents constitute the least (19), which is made up of 13 males and 6 females.

Mobilizing the People for Development

Development has come a long way. In Africa, development has been on going for centuries but in the Western World, development became significant in the period immediately following World War II. The Western World confronted the new challenge of rebuilding countries that had been shattered by war. In those days, development was considered largely synonymous with industrialization (Rapley, 2010). But in Africa especially in the rural setting, development is the process of structural transformation of society which must be of benefit to the members of the society involved (UNDP,2006).

To ensure that development benefits get to the actual beneficiaries – the rural people – the development must be participatory. In other words, the people must be involved in the development process from the stage of conception to evaluation. To ensure effective participation of the rural people, there is need to mobilize them.

Table 2: Ways of Mobilizing the Rural People

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TOTAL	HOW ARE YOUR PEOPLE MOBILIZED?								
	USE OF TOWN CRIER	USE OF WOODEN GONG	PERSONAL CONTACT USING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE	RADIO	TV	NEWS-PAPER	ANNOUNCEMENT IN MARKET	SYMBOLIC DISPLAY	TOTAL
FARMING	108	42	20	3	1	-	30	36	240
SANITATION	141	14	25	21	-	-	26	13	240
COMMUNITY STRUCTURAL PROJECTS	172	47	12	5	1	-	3	-	240
HEALTH CARE PROGS.	68	12	71	48	2	1	31	7	240
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES CAMPAIGN	89	6	70	50	4	1	20	-	240

Source: Field work, 2011.

Out of the 240 respondents in the sample, 108 admitted that when the development effort involves farming, the best way to mobilize the people towards participation is the use of town-crier, who moves from compound to compound to announce the programme. Another 42 respondents believed that the best way to mobilize the people is through beating of the wooden gong (ikoro). Twenty other respondents noted that in terms of farming activities, people are best mobilized through personal contact using the indigenous language to explain the purpose of such activities. In this case, newspapers were not used at all. Only 3 persons and one person went for radio and television respectively. Another way of mobilizing people for farming activities is through announcement in the market places especially when the market is in full session. This is supported by 30 respondents while the other 36 respondents said that people are best mobilized through symbolic display.

These displays include display of hoes and/or cutlasses at certain places in the village square. This helps to inform people that they need to gather for farming activities.

In the case of environmental sanitation such as the sweeping of market square, clearing of roads, clearing of streams and so on, 41 respondents agreed that town-crier is the best way to mobilize the people. Only 14 subjects went for the use of wooden gong (ikoro). Another 25 respondents said that the best method is through personal contact using the indigenous language. Twenty-one persons supported the use of radio. Nobody went for television and newspapers. Another 26 respondents said that the best way to mobilize people for sanitation programmes is through announcement in the market. Those who approved of symbolic display were 13 in number.

Community structural projects include the building of schools, town halls, hospitals, roads and postal agencies. Others are electrification projects and provision of pipe-borne water. These projects are common in the area of study. Most of them were obtained through self-help efforts of the people. However, to mobilize people for any of these projects, majority of the respondents (172) believed that it is best done through the use of town-crier. Another 47 subjects said it is done through the use of ikoro (wooden gong). Yet, another 12 respondents said it is best done through personal contact using indigenous language. Only 5 subjects went for radio and one person for television. Three respondents believed that announcement in markets is the best option.

In terms of health care programmes, the highest number (71) believed that personal contact using indigenous language (Igbo) is the best way to mobilize people to participate. Another 68 persons in the sample went for the use of town-crier. Those who believed that mobilization for health care projects is best done through radio were 48 in number. Twelve persons also went for the use of wooden gong. Two persons agreed that it is best done through television while one person went for newspapers. Another 31 respondents said that announcement in the markets is the best way to mobilize people for health care programmes. The remaining seven subjects went for symbolic display.

When it comes to political activities or campaigns, majority of the subjects of the study went for the use of town-crier (89) and personal contact (70). Another 50 subjects believed that they were best mobilized through the radio. Six respondents went for the use of wooden gong while 4 persons went for television. Only one person believed that newspapers can be used for such mobilization effort. The remaining twenty persons believed that announcement in the market is the best way to mobilize the people for political activities.

Development Projects and Knowledge of the People on the Application of Indigenous Media

In Mbano, indigenous communication takes the form of instruction, announcement, advertising, public relations (goodwill), entertainment, warning, spiritual activities, symbolic display and information. The materials or instruments

used for these forms of communication include metal gong (ogene), wooden gong (ekwe), flute (opi), fist flute (opi-aka), reed pipe (opi-achara), fist, eyes and palm frond. Central to all these instruments is the town-crier, who Ugboaja (1979) and Onwubiko (1996) referred to as gongman. It was noticed from the study that the whole human body or parts of it can be applied in indigenous communication. This is regarded as symbolic display. For instance, the shaving of head to the skin depicts mourning among the people of Mbanjo.

The people of Mbanjo believe that indigenous media are mostly used for funeral announcement, environmental sanitation, marriage ceremonies, advertisement of local wares, development projects, farm work, warning, information and public relations activities (Table 3).

Table 3: Difference in the Rate of Use between Indigenous and Exogenous Media in Community Activities

ACTIVITIES	FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT	ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION	DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	HEALTH CARE PROGRAMMES	FARMING	EDUCATION
INDIGENOUS MEDIA	MOSTLY USED	MOSTLY USED	MOSTLY USED	USED WHEN THE OTHER FAILS	MOSTLY USED	MOSTLY USED
EXOGENOUS MEDIA	SELDOM USED	NOT USED AT ALL	SELDOM USED	MOSTLY USED	NOT USED AT ALL	USED OFTEN

Source: Field work 2011

Table 3 shows the degree at which indigenous media and exogenous media are used in the study area. It was found that for funeral announcements, the indigenous media were mostly used while the exogenous media of radio, television and newspapers were seldom used. What the people in the area mostly use to mobilize people for environmental sanitation is the indigenous media of town crier. The exogenous media is not used at all. Again, for mobilizing people for community development project, the people mostly used the indigenous media. For health care programmes, the people of Mbanjo mostly rely on information from the exogenous media. They only use information from the indigenous media to extend what they got from the exogenous media. For planning and mobilizing people for farming activities, the people relied on the indigenous media. In the area of education, the indigenous media is most used but exogenous media is also used especially when it has to do with formal educational system.

So, the study revealed through the in-depth interviews (IDI) that exogenous media will achieve little or no success in advertising, development projects, warning and goodwill among the rural people. Similarly, exogenous media are not effective in the areas of environmental sanitation and farming in the study community. However, it was revealed that exogenous media of radio, television and prints were used extensively during the regime of General Mohammad Buhari (rtd) in Nigeria for

environmental sanitation. Generally, indigenous media feature in every activity of the community either individually or communally.

Table 4: Effect of Indigenous Media on Rural Development Projects

RURAL PROJECTS	COMMUNICATION SYSTEM USED	RESULT	UTILITY
Construction of Town hall at Umuozu	Indigenous media was used to mobilize and sensitize the people toward participation	Completed in 3 years	Used by the people of the community even before completion till present
Oil palm plantation at Obollo	Extension agents were used to sensitize the people. The project was aired on radio even before commencement	Completed in 15 months	Fruits collected by government agents. Plants reduced by 50% in 2 years.
Electrification project at Ogbor	Indigenous media was used to identify the need and mobilize fund and people toward participation.	Completed in 2 years.	People feel bad whenever light goes off. They set up vigilante group to protect the transformer.
Road construction from Amaraku to Umuelemai	Contract signed at Owerri and information got to the local people through radio.	Began in 1983, abandoned in 1984 because people could not provide land for collection of laterite. Began again in 2000 through the use of indigenous media to mobilize and sensitize the people and work was completed in 2001.	The people are happy to use the road.
Pipe-borne water project at Umunchi	Initiated by DEFRI without the people's participation.	Completed within a year.	The people used it for 6 months and the pipes became

			dry because it was sited at the hilly part of the village.
Low cost housing project at Eziama	Initiated by Shagari regime in 1980 without the people's participation.	Completed in 1982	Nobody lived in those houses because it is a taboo in the area for a person to be a tenant in his village.
Building of health center at Umueze II	Initiated by women in the area through indigenous media but they also received government support in terms of personnel and equipment. The commissioning was televised.	Completed in 3 years	The people worked at the center and also received health-care attention in times of ill-health.

Source: Field work 2011

The IDI also pointed out that in Mbanjo three development projects that involved indigenous media were completed without being abandoned. The projects were fully utilized by the people because they were relevant to their needs. The other three projects were initiated through exogenous media. Two of these projects were completed as scheduled, that is, the oil palm plantation at Obollo and the pipe-borne water project at Umunchi. One (road construction from Amaraku to Umuelemai) was abandoned until indigenous media was introduced into it. This is in line with data as shown in table 4 above. In the case of oil palm plantation, the people never benefited. Therefore, they aided the destruction of the trees because their roots were negatively affecting the fertility of their soil. As for the pipe-borne water, the people used it when the taps were running but quickly forgot it when the taps were dry because they already know from experience that it will not last long. The low cost houses were never occupied because it is a taboo for an indigene of Mbanjo to be a tenant in his own community. The road project which was abandoned for over six years before completion is still being used effectively by the people of Mbanjo community. The major reason for its adequate use was the fact that the road already existed before the new construction (Table 4).

Achieving Effective Rural Development through Combination of Indigenous And Modern (Exogenous) Media

While it is generally agreed that the best method for mobilizing people to participate in development programmes is through the indigenous media as can be seen from table 3 above, most of the participants at the focus group discussions agreed that to achieve effective development at present, there is need to use modern media to assist the indigenous media. According to them, most of the development patterns of today are themselves exogenous, that in some cases, the indigenous media may not have full explanation for them.

This view is supported by the data collected through in-depth interviews. Most of the interviewees agreed that it is necessary to allow both the indigenous and the exogenous media to complement each other. According to them, this is the only way to bring effective development in the present day reality. One of the interviewees, Nze Martin Nwachukwu puts it this way:

In the past, our fathers were doing their things their own ways using the town-crier, the gong, symbols and other things to carry out their own patterns of development. But development today has changed pattern. New things are coming in that we do not know before. So, for us to development and be like others, we must use the new communication media like radio and television. However, we will not abandon our own ways of communication. If we do, we will become strangers in our own land and those development programmes will also be strange development..... (laugh) it is better to have no development than to have strange development.

Generally, the people believed that the current trend demands the unification or blending of the indigenous and exogenous media to achieve effective development that will fit into the present generation. For instance, according to participants at one of the FGDs, if they announce fund-raising launch for building a town hall over the radio, it will extend the message to some of their youths who live in the cities. This will enable them to return home and participate in the fund-raising programme.

Enhancing Rural Development through Indigenous Communication

Table 5: Areas in which Indigenous Media Assist Rural Development

AREAS OF ASSISTANCE MEANS?	DOES INDIGENOUS MEDIA HELP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH		
	YES	NO	TOTAL
MOBILIZING PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE	213	27	240
CREATING THE SPIRIT OF BELIEVABILITY	209	31	240
CONNECTING THE PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES	51	189	240
ASSIST IN RAISING FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT	190	50	240
CREATING THE UNIFYING SPIRIT NECESSARY FOR DEVELOP.	226	14	240
PROVISION OF LAND & OTHER LOCAL MATERIALS	178	62	240
MAKING GOVERNMENT TO KNOW THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE	27	213	240

Source: Field work 2011

Table 5 shows that 213 respondents agreed that indigenous communication assists rural development by helping to mobilize the people for participation. Only 27 respondents disagreed with this point of view. It can also be seen that 209 out of 240 respondents believed that indigenous media enhance rural development by creating the spirit of believability among the people. In other words, indigenous media help to explain to the people the intention of government and/or development agencies. They also help to assure the people that the development effort will be of benefit to them. And it is only when this is achieved that real development can take place.

Only 51 subjects agreed that indigenous media can connect the rural people with development agencies. Majority of the respondents (189) disagreed with this view. Again, 190 respondents believed that indigenous communication can assist the people in raising fund for development projects. The other 50 persons disagreed with this view. It is also believed that unified spirit or solidarity is necessary for rural development. That is why 226 subjects in the sample believed that indigenous media go a long way in creating a unifying spirit among the people which is an important prerequisite for development. Only 14 persons in the sample disagreed with this view.

Out of the 240 respondents in the sample, 178 agreed that indigenous media help to convince the people to release their land and other local materials which may be needed in the development effort. The remaining 62 subjects disagreed with this point of view. On the other hand, only 27 respondents believed that indigenous media can enable government to know the need of the people. Majority of the respondents (213) believed that indigenous media cannot help to make the needs of the rural people known to government and its agencies. It can be seen that except in

the areas of connecting the rural people with development agencies and making their needs known to government, indigenous media can be used effectively in the other areas to enhance development of the rural areas. In fact, rural development is most times dependent in these areas to be effective.

Discussion

Communication in Mbanjo follows the opinion of James et al (1989), when they posit that human communication falls into two broad categories – verbal and non-verbal communication. The people of Mbanjo, like other normal human societies, use oral and written communication. Their oral communication may take the form of intrapersonal communication. This is more prominent when they experience perplexing situation or when they are contemplating on a serious plan. They also use interpersonal communication especially during discussions or at meetings.

It has been found that in line with the view of Adelugba (1996) and Foster (1969), the best form of development is one in which the beneficiaries participate actively from the inception of the programme till the evaluation stage. To achieve this, there is need to mobilize the people. As can be seen from table 2, indigenous media remain the best way to mobilize the rural people for participation in development programmes. This, to some extent, contradicts the views of modernization theorists that the best way to achieve development among the rural people is to copy the pattern of the developed nations. Data have shown that with effective use of the indigenous media to mobilize the rural people for development, true development can be achieved in the rural setting without necessarily copying the Western (developed) nations.

In the same vein, it is quite clear that the people of Mbanjo are knowledgeable about the application of indigenous media in development projects. This reflects the opinion of Ugboajah (1972:11) when he points out that the “most important thing about Africa’s traditional communication is that the audience has learnt to attach great significance to it”. It can be seen from table 4 that projects that involved indigenous media were completed on time without being abandoned and they were fully utilized by the people. This shows that it is only the rural people that can point out what they really want; and when you give them that, they will cherish it and even protect it.

However, in some cases, there may be need to involve the exogenous media (radio, television and newspapers). As can be seen from table 3, these exogenous media were effective for health care and education programmes. As a result and based on the data from FGDs, it becomes relevant to combine both the indigenous and exogenous media to achieve effective rural development. This is necessary because contrary to the views of social change theory that material aspects of indigenous media are likely to be eroded by the modern mass media, the indigenous media have continued to be relevant especially to the rural populace. And to achieve a better paradigm, it becomes pertinent to combine both the indigenous and the exogenous (modern mass) media in order to achieve a true rural development.

According to Carley and Derow (1980), social Impact Assessment model (SIA) focuses on studies in social and cultural impact of development. And to understand this, the beneficiaries of the development effort must be part of the chain for the distribution of development benefits. From table 5, it can be seen that for the impact of development to reach the rural people, there is need to use indigenous media to mobilize the people, create the spirit of believability about the benefits as well as establishing the much needed unifying spirit among the people which is a necessary ingredient for effective development.

Generally, indigenous communication is relevant to social and economic development especially in the rural communities. This is because development itself is a purposive change undertaken in a society to achieve what may be regarded as a different level of improvement.

Recommendations

From the foregoing therefore, to achieve sustainable development as directed by social change theory, there must be a social transformation. This should be based on the participation of the beneficiaries of development programmes in decision making about social or economic changes and the use of indigenous channels of communication and influence that exist in a community where change is desired. This is important bearing in mind that material culture changes faster than non-material culture.

To ensure effective participation of the people, it is important to mobilize, sensitize and seek the people's suggestions, input, involvement and so on, which can lead to a truly successful development programme. As earlier stated, this can best be done through indigenous channels. This is actually the position of Sifelani (2007) when he bemoaned the issue that environmental experts and journalists lack languages to explain indigenous environmental issues and that is why mass media sometimes drop environmental stories.

The relevance of indigenous media cannot be overemphasized. However, the best approach should be the integration of indigenous and exogenous media to form what can be called "indixogenous media". It will ensure that each strengthens the weaknesses of the other and also reinforces its strength. In other words, exogenous media can be used to promote indigenous knowledge while indigenous channels can be used to inculcate exogenous knowledge especially among rural communities.

Through this process, sustainable development can be achieved among the rural populace and the people stand a better chance of participating, cherishing, benefiting and protecting such development effort. It will also ensure that rural development programmes are properly targeted. This will definitely minimize if not eliminate failed or abandoned projects in rural communities.

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